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They had everything they could ever dream of. Living in the choicest part of globe with unlimited food and on a permanent sabbatical, they found the Garden of Eden a true paradise. Yet there was still “something else” that glittered as it hung from a tree. The forbidden fruit somehow lured Adam and Eve into losing everything and caused catastrophic spiritual damage to the world.

On Rosh HaShanah the world was created. Unlike our current existence, everything was originally created to function in an orderly system – “maintenance free.” In fact, things would sprout fully developed and ready for consumption. The only exception was the one thing that was off-limits: the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve were commanded not to partake of its fruits. But the snake ensnared them, “You see that you rule over the world. Everyone hates their competitor.

The reason God told you not to eat from the tree is because if you eat from it, you will become the master ruler just like Him!" This was the challenge of Adam and Eve. Would they take the multitudes of blessing that they were granted, appreciate their Source and serve God using them, or would they act selfishly and think that they were great because of them and forget God altogether?

Since Creation, things haven't changed much. We are each endowed with special blessings and capabilities of both material and spiritual nature. It is our duty to recognize the purpose of being granted these blessings. When we see them for what they are, we can appreciate them and use them properly by connecting with the Ultimate Source through them. By doing this, we rise above the materialism of this world and connect to God in the most beautiful and meaningful way



But so often we see people who are blessed with things like earthly riches. Despite the fact that God is the Source of all goodness, this newfound wealth actually causes them to forget Him and serve themselves and their own selfish ideas. But isn't this counter-intuitive? Shouldn't we feel humbled and recognize the obvious source of our success? Just like Adam

and Eve, it is human nature to revert back to our selfish tendencies.

As we approach the month of Tishrey and the New Year, we are once again presented with an awesome second chance. The word TiShReY symbolizes being “out of order,” as the letters appear in the reverse order of the Hebrew alphabet. Similarly, the name ChaVaH (Eve), who convinced Adam to eat from the forbidden fruit, is spelled in reverse order vis a vis the alphabet. Rebbe Nachman explains that God causes topsy-turvy events to disrupt our perceived lifestyles and schedules to remind us that He is the Source and the purpose of all.

Everything in creation was created for our sake because God is a loving and kind Creator. But we can only maximize our benefit when we use His blessings to connect to the everlasting spiritual reality of creation. Even material things were created only for spiritual purposes. When we forgot all this, we are sent these reminders. Things around us seem to spiral out of our control and we begin to see that we are really in charge.

This is the purpose of the days of Elul and Rosh HaShanah and Creation. When we ask God to renew our lives for another year with great blessing and opportunity, we are asking Him to invest in our ability to recognize Him. By seeing the signs He sends us and accepting them with love, we humble ourselves and draw ourselves and the world back into alignment with His rulership. Teshuvah means returning everything to God. By humbling ourselves, we trade the chaos of a selfish life for a faithful life of paradise and tranquility

(Based on Likutey Halakhot, Netilat Yadayim 3)